

## VIII.—Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.

*Andrews on a New Fossil Bird.*

[Note on the Sternum of a large Carinate Bird from the (?) Eocene of Southern Nigeria. By C. W. Andrews, D.Sc., etc. Proc. Zool. Soc. 1916, pp. 519-524, 4 figs.]

The British Museum has recently received from Southern Nigeria an interesting collection of fossils obtained by Mr. J. Eaglesome in a railway-cutting on the new railway from Port Harcourt to the interior. The beds appear to be of Eocene age, but the exact horizon is not yet definitely settled. In the present paper Dr. Andrews describes the anterior half of a sternum which appears to have belonged to a very large bird, twice the size of an Albatross, and undoubtedly a powerful flier; it was probably a good swimmer and diver as well. The characters point to a bird in most respects intermediate between certain of the Tubinares and Steganopodes, but obviously generically distinct from all recent forms. Dr. Andrews proposes for it the name *Gigantornis eaglesomei*, gen. et sp. nov.

*Bryant on the Roadrunner.*

[Habits and Food of the Roadrunner in California. By Harold C. Bryant. Univ. Cal. Publ., Zool. vol. xvii. 1916, pp. 1-4, 4 pls., 2 text-figs.]

There are few more interesting and curious types than the Roadrunner of western North America (*Geococcyx californianus*). A terrestrial Cuckoo with the look of a small hen Pheasant, which runs more often than it flies and which builds its own nest, it has suffered a good deal of persecution of late years owing to its supposed partiality for nestling Quails.

The present paper contains the results of a careful examination of the contents of the stomachs of some eighty individuals. From this it appears that it is omnivorous, though ground-beetles and grasshoppers form the largest percentages of the food-matter examined. The vegetable

component, about 10 per cent., consisted almost entirely of the seeds of a sunac (*Rhus*). Lizards, and occasionally a young bird or mammal, are devoured and swallowed whole. No evidence was found of the destruction of Quails, and on the whole the evidence showed that it should be certainly protected and preserved. An interesting summary of its nesting and other habits is also given.

*Cory on new South American Birds.*

[Descriptions of apparently new South American birds, with notes on some little-known species. By Charles B. Cory. Field Mus. Publ. Orn. vol. i. 1916, pp. 337-346.]

Twenty-six new forms are described in this paper. *Cercomacra huallagæ*, from Peru, is the only new species, the others, all new subspecies, are assigned to the genera *Conopophaga*, *Dysithamnus*, *Myrmeciza*, *Furnarius*, *Schizæaca*, *Synallaxis*, *Liptornis*, *Xiphocolaptes*, *Picolaptes*, *Tenioptera*, *Muscisaxicola*, *Todirostrum*, *Myiodynastes*, *Myiarchus*, *Pachyrhamphus*, *Polioptila*, *Cistothorus*, *Troglodytes*, *Planesticus*, *Anthus*, *Saltator*, *Coryphospingus*, *Tangara*, and *Schistochlamys*.

*Dabbene on the Coots and Grebes of the Argentine.*

[Notas biológicas sobre gallaretas y macás. Por Roberto Dabbene. An. Mus. Nac. Hist. Nat. Buenos Aires, xxviii. 1916, pp. 183-192, pls. i.-v.]

This paper contains the observations made by Señores Manuel and Rodriguez, well-known collectors in the Argentine, on the nesting-habits and life-histories of two Coots, *Fulica armillata* and *F. rufifrons*, and two Grebes, *Podiceps americanus* and *Podilymbus podiceps*. These observations were made in October and November, 1915, on the estancia "Charles," in the Province of Buenos Aires. The paper is illustrated with good photographs of the nests of all four species, and of the young birds in various stages of development, as well as by a coloured sketch of the heads of the two Coots when first hatched, showing the curious and complicated colour markings of the bills,

*Evans on British Birds.*

[The Birds of Britain, their distribution and habits. By A. H. Evans, M.A., pp. xii + 275, 94 figs. Cambridge (University Press), 1916. 8vo.]

This little work, by the late co-editor of 'The Ibis,' is intended primarily for the use of schools, though it will doubtless be found useful by other people who require a short and concise hand-book.

The Introduction contains a brief discussion of the general characters of the class Aves, and of such subjects as moult, flight, and migration. Then follows the systematic portion of the work. Each family or subfamily is considered in turn and a paragraph or so devoted to each species. Only those birds are treated of which may be called regular inhabitants of the British Isles. The occasional and rarer visitors are relegated to a list at the end of the work.

The classification is the same as that of Howard Saunders's 'Manual,' and the nomenclature almost that of the new edition of the B. O. U. list. In a work of this sort we feel that it would have been more useful if more space had been given to clearly pointing out the diagnostic characters of the families and genera. If the work is intended for educational purposes, it is most necessary to help the student to identify any bird he may come across, and it appears to us that the only sure method of doing this is by giving clear definitions of structural and other characters, confining them, so far as possible, to those which can be easily recognised. A series of illustrations of bills, legs, and wings—such, for instance, as are to be found in Ridgway's great work on North-American birds—would have been far more useful than the photographs with which Mr. Evans has illustrated his work. These vary very much in quality, many of them having obviously suffered in the reproduction, and we can hardly find much help in the recognition of the species in the cases of the Redstart and the Robin. Others, however, such as the Curlew, are highly characteristic, and reflect great credit on the artists.

*Geikie on the Birds of Shakespeare.*

[The Birds of Shakespeare. By Sir Archibald Geikie, O.M., K.C.B., F.R.S. Pp. 120. Glasgow (Maclehose & Sons), 1916. Post 8vo.]

The theme selected by Sir Archibald Geikie for a Presidential Address to the members of the Haslemere Natural History Society is a very attractive one, and will doubtless be acceptable to many readers of this Journal. But to those who have already devoted any attention to the subject, we fear it will prove somewhat disappointing. For although this little volume extends to 120 pages, we do not find that it contains much criticism. In fact, the author has done little more than string together a limited number of quotations from the plays of Shakespeare, leaving his readers to draw their own conclusions. This is to be regretted, for we feel sure that with his extensive knowledge of natural history, as manifested in so many of his own publications, the accomplished ex-President of the Royal Society could have written a much better book on Shakespeare's birds if he had been able to devote more time to the collection of materials.

It is not a little curious, as admitted in his Preface, that Sir Archibald Geikie had not seen, until too late to be of any use to him, a much more extended commentary on the subject which was reviewed in this Journal so long ago as 1872 (p. 185), wherein he might have found much to his purpose. But apart from this, we should have expected to find some obvious criticisms which have escaped him. To mention only one. At page 89 he quotes the scene in *Henry IV.*, in which the two carriers, on arrival at the inn in Rochester, complain that the Turkeys in their panniers are starved. Sir Archibald Geikie has overlooked the anachronism, for the Turkey was unknown in England until the later reign of Henry VIII.

On only one other point have we space to criticize, and this, perhaps, is of more importance, since it will serve to correct a wide-spread error which we are accustomed to see repeated from time to time in the daily press. On page 41,

with the object of showing that the sport of hawking in this country is not yet extinct, Sir Archibald Geikie remarks: "There is still among our King's Court Officials a Hereditary Grand Falconer, the office being held in the family of the Duke of St. Albans." This would have been true a quarter of a century ago, but it is not the case now. The royal pension was commuted in 1890, when the office was abolished, and the last holder of it died in May 1898. The sport, however, is still carried on, without State aid, by many enthusiastic falconers.—J. E. H.

*Grinnell on a new Ruffed Grouse.*

[A new Ruffed Grouse from the Yukon Valley. By Joseph Grinnell. Condor, xviii. 1916, pp. 166, 167.]

The Ruffed Grouse of Yukon Territory and of Alaska is found by Grinnell to differ from that of Alberta and other parts of western North America in its larger and paler coloration, and is here described as a new subspecies under the name *Bonasa umbellus yukonensis*.

*Gurney's Ornithological Report for Norfolk.*

[Ornithological Report for Norfolk (1915). By J. H. Gurney, F.Z.S. Zoologist, 1916, pp. 201-209, 260-266.]

Mr. Gurney has less to chronicle than usual in his annual report on matters of ornithological interest in Norfolk for 1915. This is perhaps owing to so many of the observers having gone to the front, and also perhaps to many military restrictions of observation, especially along the coast.

It is sad to read that the Spoonbills did not return last year to Breydon, nor did the Cormorants again nest in Lord Hastings's lake.

Mr. Gurney comments on the curious differences noticed between the birds observed on migration in spring and autumn. Thrushes, Blackbirds, Redwings, Starlings, Chaffinches, and Linnets are seen in enormous flocks in autumn, but never—at any rate, in such numbers—in spring. Perhaps they return by some other route; possibly they pass over Norfolk at night, and are not observed.

A large number of Rough-legged Buzzards passed over Norfolk and Suffolk in the autumn of 1915; at least twelve were trapped or shot. Other rarities were few in number. A White-eyed Duck was seen on the Broads in April, a Stork by Mr. Vincent in May, and a Black-breasted Dipper was received by Mr. Sanders from Potter Heigham.

*Gyldenstolpe on the Birds of Siam.*

[Zoological Results of the Swedish Zoological Expeditions to Siam, 1911-1912 and 1914-1915. IV.—Birds, ii. By Nils Gyldenstolpe. Kungl. Svenska Vetensk.-akad. Handl. vol. lvi. no. 2, 1916, pp. 1-160; map, 4 pls., 5 text-figs.]

There has been a good deal of activity during the last few years in regard to the ornithology of Siam, and many articles have been published in the recently established Journal of the Siam Natural History Society. The results of Count Gyldenstolpe's first journey have already been noticed in our pages ('Ibis,' 1914, p. 144). In his second journey he visited the northern extremity of Siam, bordering on the Shan States and the southern portion of the country due east of Burmese Tenasserim, and he appears to have obtained a fine booty.

The number of species mentioned in his list, which is accompanied by field-notes and critical remarks on taxonomy, is 353, and a good many of these are new to the Siamese fauna. The new forms described are *Lanius hypoleucus siamensis*, *Turdus aureus angustirostris*, *Mixornis gularis minor*, *Alseonax siamensis*, *Gerygone griseus*, *Picus vittatus eisenhoferi*, *Picus canus hessei*, *Brachylophus chlorolophoides*, *Sphenocercus pseudo-crocopus*. With one exception the new species have already been described in the Ornith. Monatsberichte for 1916. Among the illustrations will be found a sketch-map showing the route taken and the localities where collecting was done, two coloured plates illustrating the more important new forms discovered, and two plates of photographs of types of scenery encountered. The introduction contains a bibliography and an account of his wanderings, and some reflections on the zoo-geographical

relations and affinities of Siam. We should like to congratulate Count Gyldenstolpe on a fine piece of zoological exploration carried out in the field with marked energy and success, and reported on with great thoroughness and accuracy.

*Hartert and Lord Rothschild on various subjects.*

[On the forms of *Rhodinocichla rosea*. By Ernst Hartert. Nov. Zool. Tring, xxiii. 1916, p. 229.

What is the correct name of the Arabian Sea-Tern? Id. ibid. p. 288.

The alleged occurrence of *Arenaria melanocephala* (Vig.) in India. Id. ibid. pp. 291, 292.

On the European forms of *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Id. ibid. pp. 293-295.

More erroneous quotations and other errors. Id. ibid. pp. 295, 296.

On some forms of *Coraciina* (*Grauculus* auct.) from the Solomon Islands. By Lord Rothschild and Ernst Hartert. Ibid. pp. 289-291.

A new *Monacha* from Rossel Island. Id. ibid. p. 297.]

In the first of these notes the Rose-breasted Mocking Thrush of Venezuela is distinguished from that of Columbia. To the first-named is attached Hartlaub's name, given in 1849, and it stands as *Rhodinocichla rosea vulpina* (Hartl.). The latter remains *R. rosea rosea* (Less.).

In the second note the author shows that the name *Sterna albigena* usually applied to the Arabian Sea-Tern is a nomen nudum, and a new name is necessary for the species. *Sterna repressa*, nom. nov., is proposed.

The Black Turnstone (*Arenaria melanocephala*) is stated in the A. O. U. Check-list as "accidental in India." Dr. Hartert shows that the record on which the statement is based is, to say the least of it, an uncertain one. There is an example of that species in the Philadelphia Academy Museum from the collection of a Capt. Boys, who undoubtedly collected in India, but this particular bird is without any label, and that it came from India is pure conjecture.

In the fourth paper in the list Dr. Hartert proposes to recognise two races of the Cormorant in Europe—a larger

form which generally nests in cliffs, found in the North Atlantic from Nova Scotia to the British Islands and eastwards to the Kola Peninsula, and which he regards as the typical race, *Phalacrocorax carbo carbo* (L.), and a smaller form, usually nesting in trees, found in central Europe west to Holland and the coasts of France and south to the Mediterranean. This he calls *P. c. subcormoranus* (Brehm). He seems uncertain whether this last-named form is found in the British Islands. This matter must be further investigated.

The last paper by Dr. Hartert alone deals with some errors, chiefly misprints, in the 25th volume of the 'Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum,' containing the Gulls and Terns, and written by Howard Saunders.

In the first of the two papers by Lord Rothschild and Dr. Hartert, *Coracina welchmani kulambangræ*, from Kulambangra, and *C. papuensis perpallida*, from Bougainville, both in the Solomon Islands, are described as new, and a critical list of the various forms of the latter species is given.

The second note contains a description of a new Flycatcher, *Monacha cinerascens rosselianus*, from Rossel Island, of the Louisiade Group east of New Guinea.

#### *Mathews on the Birds of Australia.*

[The Birds of Australia. By Gregory M. Mathews. Vol. v. pt. 3, pp. 249-352, pls. 255-266. London (Witherby), May 1916. 4to.]

This part, which concludes the fifth volume of the work, also concludes the families of the Owls. The author regrets that he is not able to give longer accounts of their life-histories, but may console himself with the reflection that the woodland species probably do not differ therein to any great degree, and that the main points are already made clear in his pages.

Attention is particularly drawn to certain very distinct characteristics of "*Ninox*" or "*Hieracoglaux*" *strenua*, which have caused Mr. Mathews to create for it the new



genus *Berneyornis*, while he hopes that the anatomy will be examined by some expert. In connection with this species he sinks the subspecies *victoriae*.

In our last notice we misunderstood the author's view with regard to the generic name *Strix* for the "White" or "Barn" Owls. He is by no means of the opinion that this should be conserved, but uses *Tyto* instead, rather than *Flummea*. Of the genus he gives a most comprehensive and instructive account, chiefly devoted to the nomenclature and consequent synonymy. He recognises three Australian species, *T. alba* (White Owl), *T. novæ hollandiæ* (Masked Owl), and *T. longimembris* (= *candida* Gould; Sooty Owl).

No subspecies of *T. alba* are given, though further material may show that such exist, as apart from individual variation: even *T. alexandrae* is suppressed. Those admitted by Hartert are, however, scheduled.

*T. novæ-hollandiæ*, on the other hand, which is also stated to be very variable, is differently treated, no fewer than nine subspecies being allowed, viz.:—*novæ-hollandiæ*, *castanops*, *kimberli*, *melvillensis*, *riordani*, *whitei*, *perplexa*, *mackayi*, and *gulei*, while a peculiar phase (*dombruini*) is left doubtful. In the discussion of these forms Mr. Mathews strongly combats the views of Messrs. Rothschild and Hartert. *T. longimembris* is now deprived of the subspecies *georgiæ* and *walleri*, formerly proposed by the author.

After considerable hesitation *Megastrix* is still allowed to remain in the "Barn" Owl family, with subspecies *tenebricosa*, *magna*, and *multipunctata*; while the name *perconfusa* is allotted to a British New Guinea form, which the author refuses to identify with the Arfak bird (*arfaki*).

At the beginning of the present Part we find two pages which stood over from Part 3; the subspecies of *Rhabdoglaux* are there given as *rufa*, *queenlandica*, and *humeralis*. A supplement at the end of Part 4 consists of some notes on the life-histories of Raptorial birds by J. B. White and others, which had been overlooked. Plates are given of the first four subspecies mentioned under *Tyto novæ-hollandiæ*, and one in the case of other species.

*Mearns on new African Birds.*

[Descriptions of seven new Subspecies and one new Species of African Birds (Plantain-Eater, Courser, and Rail). By Edgar A. Mearns, Smithsonian Miscell. Coll. vol. lxx. 1915, pp. 1-9.]

Of late years the United States National Museum has acquired considerable collections of African birds from the Roosevelt, Childs Frick, and Paul Rainey Expeditions, and Dr. Mearns now issues his thirteenth paper devoted to descriptions of the new forms found among them. It is to be hoped that a more complete account of these collections will appear before long. The forms described are as follows :—

*Turacus hartlaubi medius*, Mt. Kenia ; *T. h. crissalis*, Mt. Mbololo, east of Kilimanjaro ; *T. h. cerulescens*, Mt. Gargues, B. E. A. ; *Corythæola cristata yalensis*, Yala River, B. E. A. ; *Cursorius gallicus meruensis*, Meru River, B. E. A. ; *C. temminckii jebelensis*, Lado Enclave ; *Rhinoptilus africanus raffertyi*, Hawash River, Abyssinia, all new subspecies ; and *Sarothrura loringi*, Mt. Kenia, new species.

*Murphy and Harper on new Diving-Petrels.*

[Two new Diving-Petrels. By Robert Cushman Murphy and Francis Harper. Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. New York, xxxv. 1916, pp. 65-67.]

In this short paper the authors distinguish, by their smaller size, the Diving-Petrels of the Chatham Islands from those of New Zealand (whence came the type of the typical form), under the name *Pelecanoides urinatrix chathamensis*.

They also describe as a distinct species, chiefly on account of the shape of the bill, the Diving-Petrel of South Georgia under the name *Pelecanoides georgica*.

*Murphy on the Teal of South Georgia.*

[Anatidæ of South Georgia. By Robert Cushman Murphy. Auk, xxxiii. 1916, pp. 270-277, pl. xiv.]

This short paper, with a perhaps rather grandiloquent title, deals chiefly with the Georgian Teal ; the only other member of the Anatidæ found in South Georgia is the

Magellanic Goose, introduced recently from the Falkland Islands, where it is in some danger of extermination. With regard to the Teal, Mr. Murphy is satisfied that its relationships are not with the other South-American species of the same genus, such as *Nettion flavirostre*, *N. oxypterum*, and *N. andinum*, but with the Duck known as *Dafila spinicauda*, widely distributed in South America, which it seems to resemble closely in markings and proportions, though it has sixteen rectrices, whereas the Pintail has only fourteen. But then, again, *Dafila acuta*, the type of the genus, has sixteen, so that the number of the rectrices of Ducks do not seem to count for much.

Mr. Murphy found nests and eggs of *Nettion georgianum*, and gives us some interesting field-notes, as well as a photograph of the birds at the nest. They only lay five eggs, a tribute to the severity of the struggle for existence in so remote and southerly a spot.

#### *Noble on the Birds of Guadeloupe.*

[The resident Birds of Guadeloupe. By G. K. Noble. Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool. Cambridge, Mass. lx. 1916, pp. 359-396.]

Mr. Noble was fortunate enough to be able to pay a three months' visit, in the summer of 1914, to the French West India Island of Guadeloupe, in the interest of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, during which time he mainly occupied himself with the resident land-birds, and he was fortunate enough to come across all the existing resident species. The birds dealt with number 46 in all, and in addition to the vernacular names and field-notes, there are valuable remarks on the taxonomy and relationships of many of the species.

In some respects Mr. Noble is conservative in his views. He believes that the numerous Antillean races of the Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*), recently described by Oberholser, cannot be maintained, but that all the Green Herons from Cuba to Grenada must be referred to one subspecies (*B. v. maculatus*). He also finds that *Cichlherminia coryi* Ridgway, is the adult of *C. herminieri* (Lafr.), the type of

which, from Lafresnaye's collection, is now at Cambridge, Mass.

One of Mr. Noble's chief reasons for visiting Guadeloupe was to obtain some information about the Black-capped Petrel, known locally as the Diablotin (*Estrelata hesitata*), which formerly bred on that island, but is now believed to be extinct. An old negro, who formerly used to hunt the birds when they came to the mountains to breed, asserted that they had not been seen on the island since the great earthquake of 1847, and certainly Mr. Noble had no success in obtaining specimens. On returning to Cambridge, however, Mr. Noble learnt that there were two pairs in the collection of the Museum; these had been collected by a well-known Guadeloupe naturalist named L'Herminier in 1842 for Lafresnaye in Paris. He found, as M. L'Herminier had previously stated, that these two pairs represented what were undoubtedly two distinct species, differing in size and in the shape and coloration of the nostril tubes. After much consideration and research, Mr. Noble has come to the conclusion that the larger of these two Dusky Petrels must be known as *Estrelata diabolica* (Lafres.), and the smaller as *E. hesitata* (Kuhl), and that they both formerly nested on the Soufrière of Guadeloupe, but at different elevations and at different seasons. The Diablotin is said to have nested also on the neighbouring island of Dominica, but of this there seems no authentic record. The British Museum contains only one example of the species, said to have been obtained at or near Hayti many years ago.

The Grassquit of Grenada, St. Vincent, and Barbados is found by Mr. Noble to be distinct from that occurring in Guadeloupe and the more northern Antilles, and is described as a new subspecies under the name of *Tiaris bicolor expectata*.

#### *Poncy on the Bird-life of Geneva.*

[Notes ornithologiques de Louis Albert Necker de Saussure (Allant de Mars 1803 à Octobre 1838). Communiquées par son Petit-Neveu

M. Henry Necker à Robert Poncey. Extr. from Bull. Soc. Zool. Genève, 1916, pp. 1-40.

Rapport de la Station ornithologique du Port de Genève et de ses environs 1915-1916. Par R. Poncey. Bull. Soc. Zool. Genève, 1916, pp. 167-189.]

In the first of these papers is printed, for the first time, the ornithological notes made between 1803 and 1838 by M. Necker de Saussure (a grandson of H. B. de Saussure, the well-known geologist), who was himself a man of general culture, as well as an ornithologist of considerable note, and author of a memoir on the birds of Geneva, published in 1823. The notes are arranged in chronological order for each month, and are chiefly of historical interest and deal with observations made in the neighbourhood of Geneva.

M. Poncey's own notes, arranged in a similar manner, deal with his daily observations chiefly on the water-birds of the Lake of Geneva between July 1915 and June 1916.

*Shufeldt's recent papers.*

[Osteology of *Palæornis*, with other Notes on the Genus. By R. W. Shufeldt. Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Africa, v. 1916, pp. 575-591, pls. xxxix-xli.]

[A Fossil Feather from Taubaté. Id. Auk, xxxiii. 1916, pp. 206-207.]

[The Significance of the Osteological Characters of the Chionides. Id. *ibid.* pp. 352-353.]

In the first of these papers Dr. Shufeldt gives us an account of the osteology of *Palæornis docilis*. The observations he has made lead him to believe that the position assigned by Sharpe to the Parrots of this and other closely-allied genera as forming a distinct subfamily of the family Psittacidae is probably more correct than that suggested by Garrod. A coloured plate of the example on which the work was done, together with two plates of the osteology, illustrate the text.

The second note deals with a fossil feather from some deposits of unknown age in southern Brazil, but there is not sufficient evidence of affinity or character to do more than mention the fact of the existence of birds occurring in this particular formation.

The third title cited is in the form of a letter to the

'Auk' in which Dr. Shufeldt draws the attention of Dr. Lowe to a paper by himself in the *American Naturalist* for 1904, in which he placed the Sheathbills between the Waders and the Gulls, and which apparently escaped Dr. Lowe's attention when he wrote his paper on this group (see 'Ibis,' 1916, p. 122).

*Swarth on the Arizona Screech Owls.*

[The Sahuaro Screech Owl as a recognisable Race. By H. S. Swarth. *Condor*, xviii. 1916, pp. 163-165.]

In this short note Mr. Swarth defends the recognition of a Screech Owl (*Otus asio gilmani*), described by him some years ago, which has been denied recently by Mr. Ridgway in his 'Birds of Middle and North America' (part 6, 1914, p. 702, footnote). He has gone into the matter afresh with additional specimens to examine, and has come to the conclusion that two distinct subspecies exist in Arizona—*O. a. cineraceus* in the higher mountains of the upper Sonoran zone, and *O. a. gilmani* in the hot lower Sonoran valleys. The first inhabits oak-covered foot-hills and canyons, the second open plains, where it finds a congenial nesting-site in the giant cactus, so conspicuous a feature of that region.

*Todd on the genus Dysithamnus.*

[On *Dysithamnus mentalis* and its Allies. By W. E. Clyde Todd. *Bull. Amer. Mus. N. H.* New York, xxxv. 1916, pp. 533-560.]

Among the rather obscure members of the family of Ant-Thrushes confined to Central and South America, the species allied to *Dysithamnus mentalis* appear to hold a prominent place. They have been alternately lumped under one name and separated into a number of subspecific forms by various writers.

In the present article Mr. Clyde Todd gives the results of his examination of 276 specimens gathered from the principal museums in the United States. A key of the adult plumages is given, and a review of the various forms with synonymy and descriptions, and in some cases sketch-maps of their distribution. Three new forms are described for

the first time, viz., *Dysithamnus mentalis aequatorialis*, *D. m. lateralis*, *D. extremus*.

*Warren on Colorado Birds.*

[Notes on the Birds of the Elk Mountain Region, Gunnison County, Colorado. By Edward R. Warren. Auk, xxxiii. 1916, pp. 292-317, 3 pls.

The Birds of Monument Valley Park, Colorado Springs, Colorado. By Edward R. Warren. Bird-lore for 1916.]

Mr. Warren is well known for the excellent work he has done in extending our knowledge of the vertebrate fauna of the State of Colorado, and the writer of this notice was greatly indebted to him for help when preparing his own account of the birds of that State. In the first of these two papers, Mr. Warren gives a list with ample field-notes of the birds inhabiting part of Gunnison County, which lies embedded in the main chain of the Rocky Mountains. Most of the country to which these notes refer is situated at an elevation of over 9000 feet, while many of the surrounding peaks reach an elevation of over 14,000 feet. The fauna therefore is essentially of a montane character, and the life-zones treated of are the Canadian, Hudsonian, and Arctic-Alpine. Among interesting birds noticed at length are the White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus*) and the two Rosy Finches (*Leucosticte tephrocotis* and *L. australis*).

In the second paper Mr. Warren gives a list of 103 species of birds observed by him in a beautiful park running along the western boundary of the town of Colorado Springs, and one of the many generous gifts to the town and State by the late Gen. Wm. J. Palmer. Down its centre runs the Monument Creek, and as it is well planted with trees and bushes, it forms a safe and convenient refuge for many species of birds. The educational value of such places is very great, and particularly in the United States, where the reckless destruction of bird-life has gone on so long unchecked, though now one is glad to see a very different spirit is gradually spreading among the great masses of the population.

*White on the Exploration of Central Australia.*

[Scientific Notes on an Expedition into the North-western Regions of South Australia. By S. A. White, M.B.O.U., and others. Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia, vol. xxxix. 1915, pp. 707-842, 2 maps and 19 plates (Birds, pp. 740-766).

In the Far North-West. An Expedition to the Musgrave and Everard Ranges. By Capt. S. A. White, M.B.O.U., pp. 1-200, many photographs and 2 maps. Adelaide, 1916. 8vo.]

In the months of June, July, and August, 1914, Capt. White, accompanied by Mr. J. P. Rogers, his hunter and taxidermist, took part in an exploring expedition to the Musgrave and Everard ranges, which lie in the north-west corner of South Australia, about 300 miles west of Oodnadatta, the terminus of the railway running northwards from Adelaide.

Large zoological and botanical collections were made, and these are all reported on, by various specialists, in the first of the publications mentioned.

The birds with which we are concerned are reported on by Capt. White himself. About a hundred species were either noticed or brought back, and the following new forms are described:—*Barnardius zonarius myrtæ*, *Smicrornis brevirostris mathewsi*, *Lewinornis rufiventris mandeæ*, while several others discovered on the expedition were previously described by the author or by Mr. Mathews. One of the most interesting finds of the expedition was the rediscovery of the Chestnut-breasted Whiteface (*Aphelocephala pectoralis*), a species described by Gould in 1871, of which the type and only known example had been lost.

A supplementary chapter to that on the birds has been written by Mr. A. M. Lea on the stomach-contents of the birds. From the examination of these, it appears that ants of various species form the staple food of the insectivorous birds of central Australia.

The second title at the head of this notice is that of a little volume containing a more popular account of Capt. White's travels into the remote and distant interior of Australia, and we have found much to interest us in



perusing it. Many observations on the birds and other animals met with are scattered through the pages, and the account of the natives of the Everard range, where Capt. White was camped by himself for quite a long time, is of special interest.

Both volumes are illustrated by a number of photographs of scenery, natives, and vegetation, all taken by Capt. White himself, and we must heartily congratulate him on his most successful piece of zoological exploration in the central deserts of Australia.

### *The Auk.*

[The Auk. A Quarterly Journal of Ornithology. Vol. xxxiii. 1916.]

The annual volume of the 'Auk' recently completed is fully up to the standard of past years, and contains a number of articles which will be read with pleasure, as well as with profit, by all ornithologists. We will endeavour briefly to indicate the scope of some of these, omitting, of course, reference to contributions which have already been noticed in our pages.

Among the faunal papers Mr. H. Mousley contributes a long article on the Birds of Hatley, Quebec Province; Messrs. Nichols & Harper on the Shore-birds of Long Island; Mr. A. P. Smith on the Birds of Kerr County, Texas; Mr. S. F. Rathburn on those of the Olympic Mountains in Washington State; and Mr. A. H. Norton on some rare Birds recently noticed in Maine. Mr. R. F. Hussey writes a pleasant article on the spring Birds met with near the Astronomical Observatory at La Plata in the Argentine, and Mr. Wetmore on the Birds of Vieques Island, which lies off the eastern coast of Porto Rico and where the writer spent about a month in the spring of 1912.

Of more general interest is a long paper by Mr. Julian S. Huxley on "Bird-watching and the Biological Sciences." It will be remembered that Mr. Huxley, a grandson of Prof. Huxley, is now Assistant-Professor of Biology at the

Rice Institute, Houston, Texas. His paper is a plea for a *rapprochement* between the amateur bird-watcher and the professional zoologist and anatomist, and he shows that many of the observations and facts gleaned by the former from careful and patient bird-watching are of the utmost value, and if skilfully noted down can be of the greatest assistance in solving some of the most difficult problems of biology.

Of papers dealing with migration problems Mr. J. C. Phillips draws the attention of his readers to the fact, recorded by Prof. Reichenow some years ago, of the occurrence of enormous flights of the North-American Ducks—The Green-winged Teal, The Pintail, and the Canvas-back—across the Marshall Islands, which lie to the north-east of New Guinea, in October and May, and he asks where do they come from and where do they go to, as none of these species are known anywhere south of the Equator, and it is difficult to know what becomes of them in the winter months; presumably they arrive from Alaska, but this, again, is a distance of over 5000 miles.

Another paper dealing with Ducks is one by Mr. W. de W. Miller in which it is pointed out that the Secters generally placed in one genus (*Oidemia*) can be naturally divided into two distinct sections distinguished by important structural characters, and that it is advisable to recognise two genera—*Oidemia*, type *O. nigra*, with an attenuated outer primary in the male, sixteen tail-feathers, and without an enlargement of the trachea; and *Melanitta*, type *M. fusca*, with a normal outer primary, fourteen tail-feathers, and two bulbous enlargements on the trachea.

Messrs. Bowditch & Philipp have recently found the nest and eggs of the Tennessee Warbler in New Brunswick. These eggs are among the rarest and least known of those of North-American Birds. The first definitely recorded were taken at Fort Smith in the far north-west. The nest and eggs of the Snow-Finch (*Leucosticta australis*) are also described for the first time, having been taken by Mr. F. C. Lincoln at an elevation of 13,500 feet in Colorado.

The following new forms are described for the first time :—*Penthestes hudsonicus nigricans* Townshend, from Labrador ; *Cryptoglaux acadica brooksi* Fleming, from Queen Charlotte Islands ; *Cloëphaja hybrida malvinarum* Phillips, from the Falkland Islands ; *Æstrelata cahow* and *Puffinus puffinus bermude* Nichols & Mowbray, from Bermuda. It will have to be determined later whether *Æstrelata vociferans*, recently described in 'The Ibis' by Dr. Shufeldt, is identical with *Æ. cahow*.

The last article in the present volume deals with a new proposal in regard to changes in the A. O. U. Check-list. Up till now, any additions or amendments have been decided on by a standing committee appointed for that purpose, and their decisions have been on the whole accepted almost universally by the body of American Ornithologists, though murmurs and grumbles have sometimes made themselves heard. It is now proposed to divide the proposed changes into two categories :—Those that may be called nomenclatural, *i. e.* cases of change of old-established names ; these will be settled by the committee, as they can all be dealt with by strict adherence to the code of rules of nomenclature. Secondly, those that may be called ornithological, such as the acceptance or rejection of newly proposed subspecies or genera. These cases must, of course, depend on the examination of large series of specimens, and also on individual opinion and judgment. With a view of inviting study and criticism on these later cases, the committee now present a list of forms described as new since the publication of the last edition of the Check-list and another of the forms which it has been proposed to reject.

We hope that this new method of dealing with a very difficult and vexed question will be found a satisfactory one and that the committee will be assisted to give a decision in these cases, which will commend itself to the large body of working ornithologists of the United States. Personally we still feel that many of the nomenclatural questions cannot be decided by a code of rules, but must depend on the opinion of the individual worker. Such questions, for

instance, as to whether an old and obscure description is sufficiently explicit or not to diagnose a well-known species, at once occurs to one. Is Boddaert's description of *Motacilla borin* sufficient to diagnose the British Garden Warbler as it is believed to be by Hartert, but not by the Committee of the B. O. U. who drew up the recently published list? Or, to take another question in which the A. O. U. and B. O. U. list differ. What is the type of *Ampelis*, and can it be used for the Waxwings? That question is discussed on p. 362 of the B. O. U. list, and the conclusion there given is of course the one favoured by the present writer but not by the A. O. U. Committee.

#### *Avicultural Magazine.*

[Avicultural Magazine. Third Series. Vol. vii., November 1915-October 1916.]

Notwithstanding the frequent clamouring of the editor for contributions, the 'Avicultural Magazine' seems to be able to hold its own and to give us a continuous flow of articles of all sorts relating to aviculture and kindred subjects. We have only space to mention a few of those more interesting to ornithologists generally.

"A French Member," who originally imported two species of Humming-birds alive from Guadeloupe, has again after two failures succeeded in obtaining another lot from Venezuela. About twenty-five birds were safely landed and among them were the following species:—*Trochilus mango*, *Ægyrtria fimbriata*, *Æ. milleri*, *Sanzerottea felici*, *Chrysolampis elatus*, and *Eulampis jugularis*. The birds were landed in August 1915, and we hope that some of them are still alive.

Mr. F. E. Blaauw writes on his observations and experiences with the Humming-bird, *Eustephanus galeritus*, in the southern part of South America, and compares its behaviour with that of the Sun-birds of South Africa. He notices that the Sun-birds seldom hover in front of a flower with quivering wings, as the Humming-birds invariably do. Mr. Blaauw also writes on the birds he

observed along the river at Oudtshoorn in South Africa, and on the breeding of the Emperor Goose at Gooilust.

The editor, Mr. Astley, contributes several articles; the one of most general interest is concerned with his Motmot (*Momotus momota*) and the method by which the long tail-feathers become racketed, a subject he has also discussed in our own pages. His article is illustrated with photographs and a beautiful coloured plate.

Other coloured plates illustrate the Pink-crested Touraco (*Turacus erythrophthalmus*), lately bred by M. Delacourt in his aviaries at Villers-Bretonneux in France, and the Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*), a familiar North-American bird. This last plate and article are reproduced from 'Bird-lore.'

Several members have sent accounts of the birds noticed by them at the front: in the case of Flanders, Capt. Gosse and Lt.-Col. Tweedie, and in the case of Macedonia, Capt. B. E. Potter.

There are many other articles of a strictly avicultural interest which we are unable to comment on for want of space; Dr. Hopkinson concludes his useful dictionary or glossary of the English names of Parrots, and commences another dealing with the many birds known under the name of Robin.

#### *Journal of the Nat. Hist. Soc. of Siam.*

[The Journal of the Natural History Society of Siam. Vol. ii. no. 1, 1916. Edited by Malcolm Smith and W. J. F. Williamson. Bangkok. 8vo.]

An energetic band of enthusiastic naturalists resident at Bangkok have recently founded a Natural History Society to investigate and study the zoology and botany of Siam, and have also started a journal in which to publish their results. The first part of the second volume, which has recently reached us, contains an interesting paper by Mr. Williamson, one of the editors, on "Some Birds not previously recorded from Siam." These are thirty in number and include several interesting forms, such as the

Formosan Skylark (*Alauda gulgula sala*), previously only known from Formosa and Hainan, the New Zealand Godwit (*Limosa novæ-zealandiæ*), and the Shoveller (*Spatula clypeata*).

Another note contains some account of the very rare Giant Ibis (*Thaumatibis gigantea*), of which only four examples are known, the first having been obtained in Cochin China and described by Oustalet. A photograph of a mounted specimen obtained in Siam by Mr. K. G. Gairdner in 1913, and now in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, illustrates this note.

A third note by Mr. Williamson deals with the distribution of *Geopelia striata*, which is common about Bangkok, but is believed to have been introduced as a cage-bird from Singapore, as it is found throughout the Malay Peninsula.

---

*List of other Ornithological Publications received.*

- BLAAUW, F. E. Waarnemingen op het Gebied van Dierengeografie in Zuid-Afrika. Tijdschrift K. Ned. Aardrij. Genoots. xxxiii. Leiden, 1916.
- MULLENS, W. H. & SWANN, H. K. A Bibliography of British Ornithology. (Parts III. & IV. London, 1916.)
- THORBURN, A. 'British Birds,' Vol. iv. London, 1916.
- Bird Notes. (New Series, Vol. vii. Nos. 10-11. Ashbourne, 1916.)
- British Birds. (Vol. x. Nos. 5-7. London, 1916.)
- Bull. Soc. Zool. de Genève. (Tome ii. Fasc. 7-9. Genève, 1916.)
- California Fish and Game. (Vol. ii. No. 4. San Francisco, 1916.)
- The Condor. (Vol. xviii. No. 5. Hollywood, Cal., 1916.)
- The Emu. (Vol. xvi. pt. 1. Melbourne, 1916.)
- The Irish Naturalist. (Vol. xxv. No. 10. Dublin, 1916.)
- Journal of the Federated Malay States Museum. (Vol. vii. pt. 1. Singapore, 1916.)
- Junta de Ciencias Naturals de Barcelona. (Anuari, 1916.)
- Revue Française d'Ornithologie. (Nos. 90, 91. Orléans, 1916.)
- Rivista Italiana di Ornitologia. (Vols. i.-iii. Bologna, 1911-15.)
- The Scottish Naturalist. (Nos. 58-60. Edinburgh, 1916.)
- South Australian Ornithologist. (Vol. ii. pt. 8. Adelaide, 1916.)